

THE SHEKEL

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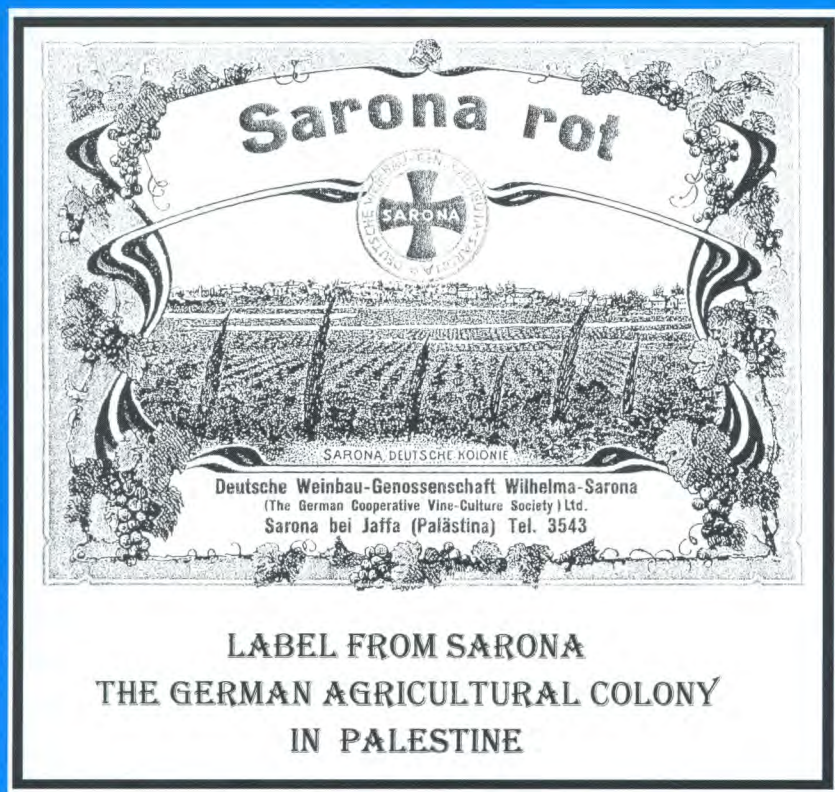
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EDWARD SCHUMAN, EDITOR

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The American Israel Numismatic Association (A.I.N.A.) is a cultural and educational organization dedicated to the study and collection of Israel's coinage, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. A.I.N.A. is a democratically organized, membership oriented group, chartered as a not for profit association under the laws of The State of New York. A.I.N.A.'s primary purpose is the development of programs, publications, meetings and other activities which will bring news, history, social and related background to the study and collection of Judaic numismatics, and the advancement of the hobby. The Association supports a web page <http://amerisrael.com> in which full information about the organization and a sampling of past articles from the SHEKEL are shown. The Association attends national and regional conventions, sponsors study tours to Israel, publication of books and catalogs and other activities which will be of benefit to the members. A.I.N.A. supports Young Numismatists programs which encourage and introduce youth to our hobby. Audio-visual and slide programs are available from the A.I.N.A. archives on many Judaica subjects and are available at no cost except for transportation charges. Local Israel Numismatic Society chapters exist in several areas. Please write for further information.

The Association publishes the SHEKEL six times a year. It has been referred to as a Jewish Reader's Digest. The SHEKEL is a journal and news magazine prepared for the enlightenment and education of the membership. You are invited to submit an article for publication.

Annual Membership fees:

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Mel Wacks

Looking Forward to the "Good New Days"

Everyone talks about the "good old days" ... but what about the good new days? Sure, we no longer run off to meetings of coin clubs, etc. ... but we can sit at home and the whole world is available to us on the Internet. If you have a computer you know what I mean, if you don't it's not too late to find out!

Even though I am an Electrical Engineer with a Masters Degree, I really didn't want to have anything to do with personal computers. I thought I had no need for one. But about 10 years ago, my daughter wanted a computer for her business, and I offered to pay for half. Well, since I paid for half, I should at least get my money's worth, and I learned how to get on the Internet. My life hasn't been the same since, and I wouldn't give it up for any thing. I book all my travel, buy furniture, Judaic coins and medals too.

Then there is email - a free way to communicate with individuals or groups. And here's where you come in! I ask all AINA members who have access to email to drop a note to me at numismel@aol.com. I will communicate with all of you from time to time, and you will have the ability to communicate with everyone else in our group. We could have contests that offers Israeli coins as prizes ... we can offer items for sale or send everyone our want lists ... we can have discussions ... schmooze ... kvetch ... and make new friends. Let's make good new days even better than the old days!

If you don't have a computer or are not connected to the Internet, you don't know what you are missing. You are never too old to start. Ask your children or grandchildren to tell you how. I look forward to hearing from you and to starting an exciting new phase of collecting Israel/Judaic numismatics.

Happy Collecting,



THE EDITOR'S PAGE

By Edward Schuman

The illustration on the front cover of this magazine is of a wine label from the German Templer colony of Sarona. Your editor has always been intrigued with Sarona and the original German Templer colonies in the Holyland. In Arie Kindler's monographs on these early settlements there is mention of Sarona and a notation that it was a shame that Germans rather than Jews would be successful in cultivating the land. The label illustrates the fields of Sarona with the colony on the background.

The story of the mysterious Jewish medal which was listed and sold on Ebay and then illustrated in the last Shekel issue has been solved. Dr. Ira Rezak, a renowned collector of Jewish medals has supplied the answers. What was supposedly a marriage medal or token has turned out to be something far different. Read his article and you will be amazed.

It must be close to 25 years ago that Bob Leonard last wrote for the SHEKEL. He is active in the Tokens and Medals Society and through a legacy left by Ben Odesser, administers the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award that is given each year for the best numismatic article in the SHEKEL. Bob has researched the charity of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel to the Nth degree. This charity, which issued more tokens and medals than any other, had a surprise and unusual scandalous ending.

Donna Sim's profile series has proved to be very popular with our readers. Her subject in this issue is Shmuel Aviezer. Shmuel has had enough articles printed in the SHEKEL to fill up several volumes alone. He surely deserves the honor of being profiled.

We do not know where the time has gone to but the masthead shows No. 6 and this is the final issue for 2005. Florence will be mailing out the 2006 dues notices shortly. When you receive this notice please mail back your dues promptly. It makes her job much easier if you do so. If you can add a small sum extra to help with the postage, it will be acknowledged and appreciated.

Till the next issue



ABOUT THE UNUSUAL MEDAL IN THE SEPT.-OCT. SHEKEL
BY IRA REZAK, MD

Dear Ed: I noted your personal interest in the medal illustrated on page 9 of the current SHEKEL, as well as your appeal for further information on it. I don't own it but, as the following will show you, I too am a bit intrigued by it. So, I've written something that sheds some oblique light on the subject even if it is hardly definitive. Should you find it suitable for use in the SHEKEL, by all means feel free to use it - if you do decide to do this, perhaps you might again include the picture of the "unusual medal" for comparison. But even if you choose not to publish this small item, please accept my write-up as a token of my continuing appreciation and admiration of your efforts as editor. Ira

In the **SHEKEL**, Vol. XXXVIII, No 5, pp 8-9, "a most unusual medal" is pictured and inquired about. While the size of the "unusual medal" is not given, its fabric is remarkably similar to a 25 mm medal reeded edged silver medal in the collection of the present writer. The reverse inscription on this latter item, pictured below, also refers to the year 5680 as a year of redemption, but it replaces the quotation from the Song of Songs by a blessing: "May the Glory of Jerusalem Protect You". The enlargement of the central letter *shin* in Jerusalem emphasizes its amuletic character by echoing the *Shaddai* on the other side.

Though both medalets are identically dated, the similarity of styles of foliation and letter forms leave little doubt that they come from the same maker; yet the dies for the obverse, the side with the star, are subtly but distinctly different. It appears that the same punches may have been used on both dies for the large central *magen david*, for the foliate elements in the angles of that star, and for the smaller stars within the outer wreath. The wreath itself, however, is different as are the spatial relationships between the various elements. The variable letter forms used for the reverses of the two medals seem to have been hand engraved.

Taken together such evidence suggests the methodology of a small private jeweler or silversmith. Because both pieces have an amuletic quality with *shaddai* as the major obverse statement, because one medal refers to Jerusalem, and because the ornate and non-pictorial style all suggest a Sephardic origin, one may hazard the guess that they were made by a jeweler, perhaps Yemenite, possibly Bezalel-trained, in Jerusalem.

It is interesting that the year 5680 (1920) is referred to as "*shenat hageulah*", which may be read as the year of the redemption as you have

done, or as the year of liberation. Liberation from Turkish rule as perceived by Jews in Palestine, however, was 1917, so the question is : what would have been the reason to identify 1920 as the year of redemption from the perspective of Jews in Jerusalem?

The likeliest reason is that in April 1920 at San Remo, Italy, a conference of the allied victors of World War One, Britain, France and Italy, confirmed the Balfour Declaration, promising a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The wartime Balfour Declaration is often retrospectively cited as the earliest date of this promise, but it was the San Remo Conference agreement during the course of planning the post-war re-arrangement of the political map which seemed to Jewish contemporaries the more impressive and definitive pledge.

A medal designed by C.J. van der Hoef was struck in Holland in 1920 by the Royal Begeer firm to the order of the Dutch Zionist Association to celebrate this event. According to Arthur Polak's catalog of Dutch Jewish medals (1958), where it is listed as no. 66, it was made as a 93 mm cast bronze medal and also as a 29 mm medal struck with an intrinsic loop for distribution to members of the Zionist Organization that year. Silver copies were presented to Chaim Weitzman, then President of the World Zionist Organization, and to Vladimir Jabotinsky, the Director of the Zionist Organization's Building Fund. The Dutch medal bears not only the date 5680, but also a date 3830 which corresponds to the year 70 of the Common Era, the year in which the Temple was destroyed and the last independent Jewish state extinguished. The obverse depiction also suggests a continuity between the old, represented by the robed figure on the left, and the new, the worker on the right. Such iconography, simultaneously suggesting continuity between, yet also transition from, old to new, was typical in Zionist ideology of the period.

Clearly then, in 1920 as word of the San Remo agreement circulated widely among world Jewry, hope for a "redemption" would certainly have arisen in the hearts and minds of secular zionists, but equally in those more religiously orientated. One may suggest that the Dutch piece is representative of the mainstream zionist position, invoking redemption in both religious and in secular terms. The small silver medal seems much more conservatively religious in its orientation, offering a promise of protection and redemption from Jerusalem, but without any reference to modern forces.

The similar medal previously published in the **SHEKEL** (Vol. XXXVIII, No.5, pp. 8-9) is also couched in biblical rather than modern terms. By extrapolation from the arguments offered above, one would guess that both of these two small silver pieces were made by a Sephardic

jeweler and amulet maker in Jerusalem inspired, in the immediate aftermath of the San Remo declaration, to hope, as we all do, for the redemption of Israel.



Song of Songs
Medal



May the Glory of
Jerusalem
Protect You
Medal



Dutch Medal
Issued For the
San Remo
Convention



S A R O N A

"Friends of Jerusalem" a Christian sect of Unitarian learning was founded in Germany in 1860. The members considered it to be their task to create Gods Kingdom on Earth in the Holy Land. In 1868 they immigrated in one body to Palestine, settling in Haifa and founded a quarter which till today is known as the German Colony. In 1871, they founded an agricultural settlement which they named Sarona which was regarded by some Jewish pioneers as a "model" similar to what the Jewish immigrants should aspire to.

"From Desert Sands to Golden Oranges" is a book that details the settlement's foundation; the extreme hardships endured by the early settlers; the innovations in agriculture (plants and cultivation) and introduction of motorized irrigation systems; the trade skills brought and developed; orderly settlement planning and new styles of architecture and building; the traumas and internment of World War I; the rebuilding after the war; life generally in the settlement; the many and varied business enterprises; sporting, social and cultural activities during the British Mandate period; the settlers internment during World War II and their forced departure from Palestine.

A chapter deals with the issues of preservation and restoration of significant buildings and structures built by the settlers. That restoration work is now in the care of the City Council of Tel Aviv and its Preservation Team. The settlers of Sarona left a proud heritage in the Holy Land, Palestine and Israel. Their buildings, their enterprises and their agricultural ventures will forever be remembered as having contributed significantly to the modernization of Palestine and ultimately Israel.

By 1874 fourteen stone homes of the infant settlement had been built along the two main roads and another two were under construction. Some houses were single story and others double story and surrounded by a garden. Several water wells up to 60 feet deep had also been constructed. The open area behind the Community House had been planned as a little forest - wooded area, known as the *"Waelde"* (little woods). In later times, many community outdoor functions were held there. 1200 trees were planted - including eucalypts, acacias and mulberry trees. The purpose of this initial planting was to provide shade from the dangerous sun's rays, cleanse the air and act as a windbreak.

Many of the surrounding fields were already starting to become productive with the assistance of irrigation. At that time some orange and

lemon trees had been planted as well as apricot, almond, peach, quince, olive, fig and walnut trees. In the vegetable gardens cabbage, cauliflowers, lettuce, onions, carrots, melons and "Arabic" vegetable varieties were planted. Sugar cane was a prevalent crop plant.

Over the next few years other vegetables and plants were grown - these included tomatoes, potatoes, celery, cucumbers, cress, capsicums, mustard, parsley, peppermint, garlic, radishes, lentils, beans, sugar peas and poppy seed. Some European (German) seeds were not suitable for the hotter conditions of the Holy Land and local seeds and seeds from other areas were being experimented with.

The settlers had achieved in just a few years the capacity to already export some oranges and lemons as well as selling watermelons and vegetables. The Saronia settlers are accredited with being the pioneers in applying modern agricultural practices in the Holy Land - use of fertilizers and modern farming tools to increase production. They focused on crops that were in demand and which they could readily sell. This "agriculture-for-profit" was an "economic" innovation rather than the existing practice in the Holy Land at that time of "self-sustained" agriculture.

Although not yet at a productive stage the settlers realized quickly that the sandy soil with its limestone base would be suitable for vineyards and wine production. They were looking to wine production as becoming an important product for the future. A variety of vines were imported from Europe.

One reason why the settlers turned to vineyards was due to the volume of theft that was occurring to other crops. It was estimated a third of the crops of the Saronian farmers were stolen at that time. The wine-making grapes that were planted were not palatable to the Arabs (nor to the jackals).

The dairy industry was also in its infancy. A problem for the owners of cows was to provide proper feed. Fields needed to be fertilized to produce feed for the stock. Arab shepherds were engaged to look after the stock when it was allowed out of the cowsheds.

In the publication *Die deutschen Siedlungen in Palaestina*, (The German Settlements in Palestine), by Hans Brugger, reports that after the initial settlement was expanded through land purchases the diligent and hardworking Saronia farmers really made the settlement "blossom". The well maintained and properly fertilized fields yielded abundant crops. For the animals the farmers cut hay and clover was grown for special feed. Vineyards were started and 160 olive trees planted. These trees were brought by camel from the mountains and each one cost one Franc. The

trees were root tubers which had been broken from the roots of established "oil" tree. They were approximately 3 inches in diameter and young saplings had started to grow from them.

In 1875 Joel Moshe Salomon, the famous Jewish "redeemer of land" visited Sarona and noted that:- **"the heart of Israel is both saddened and filled with joy by this beautiful sight. The heart is happy when it sees how our Holy Land can be changed into God's paradise, however, we should be ashamed when we see persons here, who are not our people, but were the first ones to bring our land to blossom, whilst we lazily stand about"**

The eucalypts that had been planted grew and absorbed most of the water in the marshy areas, and the water flows in Wadi Musrara were better able to be regulated. The fields, vineyards and orchards started to provide some form of income for the settlers. Life, however, was still spartan - hard work six days a week. Sunday was a day of rest with a regular religious service.

During 1881, ten years after its founding, the settlement experienced a very dry year with a resultant drop in yields in grain crops. Hot desert winds and a vine disease - "Reblaus" (phylloxera) destroyed many grapes with detrimental effect on wine production. New root stock was imported from America to restart the vineyards. Several of the settlers resorted to use their horse and carts to ferry tourists to and from Jaffa to Jerusalem to supplement their meager incomes. Sarona's original plan of 26 dwellings was revised and expanded during that year so as to cope with increase number of new settlers.

During the latter 1880s, Sarona, like the other Templer settlements, was faced with an overall shortage of financial resources for infrastructure development. The building of roads, development of land, and community facilities were a big burden on the struggling settlers. The Community Council introduced *Frondiest* (a form of compulsory labor) for the male settlers to help with the construction of roads, drainage and other community related projects. Settlers were required to do a certain number of hours community work. If they personally could not do it they were permitted to send someone else in their place. This practice of community work continued into the 20th century. Employment opportunities for tradesmen and anyone seeking a profession were very limited.

In an endeavor to overcome the financial problems of the Templer settlements in Palestine, the Temple Society Central Fund was registered as a partnership with the Imperial German Consulate in Jerusalem on 10 July 1887. The purpose of the Fund was to further German colonization in the

Orient and in particular the interests of agriculture, trade and commerce, by establishing credit facilities. Tokens were minted in Germany to facilitate trade. These are highly collectible items for Judaica numismatic collectors.

A separate Sarona community council with a mayor was established in 1879 to deal with local community issues. The Community Council had introduced a levy called "der Zehnte" (tenth) on all income. This form of levy/tax could be paid in either cash or goods/produce. If it was paid in the latter the goods or products would be sold. The Central Council of the Temple Society dealt with religious, health and some educational matters as well as support for the poor.

In March 1883, the Mayor of Sarona, reported in his Annual Report that nine boys and one girl were born in Sarona during 1882, there were 219 residents in Sarona, including 35 school children and 43 children under six years of age. Three new homes with sheds and barns had been built and more land (small holdings) had been purchased from the Arabs. The irrigation system around Sarona had been extended.

A description of Sarona by Yehiel Brill, a Jewish community leader in the 1880s, states that the Sarona settlement was designed and built "...with knowledge and intelligence, in the hands of the diligent and with much effort[...] in the colony we sat, also drank beer, and after we saw and studied the houses and the fields, the beauty and the order, the life of tranquillity and quietness in the colony, we remarked, if a Templer congregation, composed of persons low in means, and rich only with a determination to make the Holy Land inhabited as in past days[...] if they could aspire and work it out, to erect such a colony not to be found even in Germany, so should we[...]."

Templer Tokens were issued in the 1880's and were redeemed before World War I when some Templers left Palestine. The obverse side shows a plow in the center surrounded by the inscription Centralcasse des Templer. The reverse have Consummarke with the value in the center. There is also a variety without the word Consummarke. It is presumed the value is Turkish Paras.



Language of the Sefardi Jews

Ladino, otherwise known as Judeo-Spanish, is the spoken and written Hispanic language of Jews of Spanish origin. Ladino did not become a specifically Jewish language until after the expulsion from Spain in 1492 - it was merely the language of their province. It is also known as Judezmo, Dzhudezmo, or Spaniolit.

When the Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal they were cut off from the further development of the language, but they continued to speak it in the communities and countries to which they emigrated. Ladino therefore reflects the grammar and vocabulary of 14th and 15th century Spanish. The further away from Spain the emigrants went, the more cut off they were from developments in the language, and the more Ladino began to diverge from mainstream Castilian Spanish.

In Amsterdam, England and Italy, those Jews who continued to speak Ladino were in constant contact with Spain and therefore they basically continued to speak the Castilian Spanish of the time. However, in the Sephardi communities of the Ottoman Empire, the language not only retained the older forms of Spanish, but borrowed so many words from Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Turkish, and even French, that it became more and more distorted. Ladino was nowhere near as diverse as the various forms of Yiddish, but there were still two different dialects, which corresponded to the different origins of the speakers.

Oriental Ladino was spoken in Turkey and Rhodes and reflected Castilian Spanish, whereas Western Ladino was spoken in Greece, Macedonia, Bosnia, Serbia and Romania, and preserved the characteristics of northern Spanish and Portuguese. The vocabulary of Ladino includes hundreds of archaic Spanish words which have disappeared from modern day Spanish, and also includes many words from different languages that have been substituted for the original Spanish word, from the various places Ladino speaking Jews settled.

Some terms were actually transferred from one community to another through commercial or cultural relations, whereas others remained peculiar to particular communities. These foreign words derive mainly from Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French, and to a lesser extent from Portuguese and Italian.

In the Ladino spoken in Israel, several words have been borrowed from Yiddish. For most of its lifetime, Ladino was written in the Hebrew alphabet, in Rashi script, or in Solitro, a cursive method of writing letters. It was only in the 20th century that Ladino was ever written using

the Latin alphabet. In fact, what is known as Rashi Script was originally a Ladino script which became used centuries after Rashi's death in printed books to differentiate Rashi's commentary from the text of the Torah.

At various times Ladino has been spoken in North Africa, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, France, Israel, and, to a lesser extent, in the United States (the highest populations being in Seattle, Los Angeles, New York, and south Florida) and Latin America.

By the beginning of this century, with the spread of compulsory education in the language of the land, Ladino began to disintegrate. Emigration to Israel from the Balkans hastened the decline of Ladino in Eastern Europe and Turkey.

The Nazis destroyed most of the communities in Europe where Ladino had been the first language among Jews. Ladino speakers who survived the Holocaust and emigrated to Latin America tended to pick up regular Spanish very quickly, whilst others adopted the language of whichever country they ended up in. Israel is now the country with the greatest number of Ladino speakers, with about 200,000 people who still speak or understand the language, but even they only know a very limited and basic Ladino.

In 1996 Israel established a national Authority for Ladino Culture headed by Yitzhak Navon, the Fifth Israel President with the aim of encouraging and supporting Ladino heritage and language.



In 2005 an official State Medal was issued called the *Ladino Medal*. On the face, the word Ladino and a line from a Ladino poem expressing yearning for Jerusalem written in Rashi script; in the background decorative scrollwork from the synagogue in Toledo. Around the edge the words *The Language of the Sefardi Jews* in Hebrew and English. On the reverse, windows typical of the Toledo Synagogue and verses from Psalms. *Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest for herself* and *Happy are they who dwell in thy house: they are ever praising thee*.

Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel: Its History and Contribution Tokens

By Robert D. Leonard Jr.
AINA #6416

On March 13, 1881, Czar Alexander II of Russia was assassinated. His successor, Alexander III, was a reactionary who introduced anti-Jewish measures. Pogroms occurred in 1881-82, and again in 1891-92 and—with greater viciousness—1903-06.

An intended result of this oppression was Jewish emigration, and it worked. Almost 10,000 Russian Jews left for the United States in 1881, and the number tripled in 1882. Soon it exceeded 100,000 per year. Between 1881 and 1920, about 1.4 million Russian Jews came to the United States. Many of these Jews settled in New York City; in 1906, the estimated Jewish population of New York state was 750,000, but by 1919 the estimated Jewish population of New York City alone was 1.5 million.

By the early 20th century, some of the early immigrants were becoming elderly and the need arose for their care. However, in 1901, in all of New York City there were only four Jewish homes for the aged, plus one in Yonkers. To address this situation, the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel was organized in November 1909 (per the *American Jewish Year Book*, 5680 (Sept. 25, 1919-Sept. 12, 1920), and the *New York Times*, July 15, 1952) by Dr. Adolf D. Lindemann, a Lower East Side pharmacist, and some of his philanthropic friends. (The *American Jewish Year Book*, 5672 (Sept. 23, 1911-Sept. 11, 1912), wrongly gives "1906.") Rev. Shalom Binder was elected as the first President.

At first, the Home seems to have been a charity devoted to fund raising and not an actual residence; in 1911 the address of its Secretary, M. Markowitz, was 1627 Madison Avenue, seemingly not the location of an old people's home. On December 2, 1914, however, the property at 230 East 10th Street was acquired, though with a mortgage of \$18,750 to pay off. It had a street frontage of just 25 feet. Shortly thereafter, the first residents moved in.

From this small beginning the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel began a series of expansions. In April 1915, under the leadership of then President Maglich Breitbart, plans were filed with the Manhattan Bureau of Buildings for the construction of a second structure adjoining the existing one. The new building was to connect to the existing Home and to have five stories plus a basement, and the original building was to be increased in height to five stories also, with a basement. This expansion

was to double the street frontage alone to 50 feet, but the capacity would increase by more than 100% due to the increase in height of the original Home.

The budget was announced as \$55,000, \$45,000 for the new building with its Italian Renaissance style façade of brick and limestone, with the balance going toward renovation of the existing building. In May 1919, however, the New York Building Department approved a *four* story and basement home only at 230 and 232 East 10th Street. The cost was given in the New York *Times* for May 9 as \$12,000, seemingly covering only the alterations to 230 E. 10th Street.

That same year the *American Jewish Year Book*, 5680 listed the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel as having 3,000 members, i.e., donors, as the number of residents was less than 160. Jacob Pompan was Secretary and Superintendent and Judge Aaron J. Levy (about whom much more later) was President. Judge Levy presided over an “indignation meeting” for the Widow’s Pension Fund that was held at the Home on January 6, 1916, and perhaps had assumed the presidency by then.

Judge Levy was re-elected President of the Home at the thirteenth annual Board of Directors meeting, May 27, 1923. The directors were welcomed to the home by Chaim Weis, who claimed to be celebrating his 105th birthday! The hearty Mr. Weis walked unassisted to the main floor from his room three flights up, and attributed his longevity to never using tobacco in any form and to taking a nip of brandy at every meal, Prohibition notwithstanding. “Asked how he arranged for the nip under the Volstead act, Chaim said that he had some good friends in the neighborhood of the home who kept him supplied,” the New York *Times* reported. Mr. Weis added that he hoped to outlive his uncle, who reached 115: “I would like to live as long as I can; but God is the boss and I take my orders from him.”

Judge Levy was so charmed by Mr. Weis that he promised to send him a new suit of clothes and a high silk hat, “so that he might lead the procession of the old folks to the synagogue on Saturdays.”

In his acceptance speech upon re-election as President, Judge Levy said that the Home had a waiting list of 300. The board discussed plans for building a new \$400,000 home, using funds to be raised by popular subscription.

Chaim Weiss (as his name was now spelled) was still around two years later, on June 21, 1925, on the occasion of the opening of a third building of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel—though now he claimed to be 108! He celebrated the opening of the new addition by dancing for the assembled guests. This time he revealed the secret of his long life as “everything in moderation.”

The new building, adjoining the two former ones, had been bought and renovated at a cost of \$50,000. At this time Max Lacher was President, while Judge Aaron J. Levy had been elevated to Honorary President; Max Dick was Vice President. More than \$10,000 was raised on opening day, the *New York Times* reported. Funds for current expenses were to be raised by the Ladies' Auxiliary via a parade.

On March 19, 1927, the Home's most famous resident "celebrated his 109th birthday" by dancing the *chsidesche*, an old Romanian dance, "and puffing a cigarette as he danced," apparently having taken up smoking since his 105th birthday party less than 46 months before. His claim of great age made him once again the guest of honor of the officers of the Home. (By 1927, Mr. Weiss had harmonized his stated age to that he used in 1923, but since he had been a resident for only twelve years his true age was impossible to verify.)

A month before, Anshel and Rachel Vladimer celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary at the Home. The whole week beginning February 2, 1927, was set aside to honor them, with a general party for the approximately 200 residents and staff on February 3 or 4. Mr. Vladimer was then 95 and his wife 93; though she was "a little feeble," Mr. Vladimer, a retired blacksmith, insisted that he was "as strong and sound as he was thirty years ago." He assisted at worship services by passing the books around and never used glasses in reading. Like Chaim Weiss, he deplored Prohibition and longed to serve vodka or whiskey at the festivities.

By 1928 the Board of Directors had apparently scaled back their expansion plans. In April, a campaign to raise \$100,000 for a new building was begun. At that time the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel had accommodations for only 160, but hoped to increase this to 500 with a new facility. However, the *New York Times* reported that as of June 30, 1928, only \$15,000 had been received and that an appeal was made that day for further assistance.

One of the activities of the home during the 1930s was an annual outing. On July 2, 1934, over 150 of the residents left the city by bus for a day in the country at Mount Freedom, NJ, at which Tobias Wildstein, the oldest resident, gave a swimming exhibition. On July 2, 1935, a similar-sized group visited Monsey, NY, where a baseball game was held. The athletic Mr. Wildstein, who then claimed to be 109 years old, hit a triple. The average age of the players was 88.

During 1935 the fund drive succeeded at last, and by December a new ten-story building had been completed, at a cost of \$750,000. It was equipped with a solarium, roof garden, and spacious hospital ward, reported the *New York Times*. The new facility was able to accommodate

the 100 to 150 residents of the former building, and in addition, to accept 400 aged Jewish men and women in various New York state and city institutions who were to be transferred to it.

Just before vacating the old home, though, the residents were treated on December 8 to another "109th birthday party," this time for Tobias Wildstein. Mr. Wildstein showed off by igniting a dollar bill and started using it to light the 109 candles on his three-foot birthday cake on a table in the Home's basement. But feisty Mrs. Rosie Leff, 101, promptly snuffed it out, and the master of ceremonies, former Alderman "Wireless" Louis Zeltner, had to provide a paper match instead. With "some resignation," Mr. Wildstein pocketed his damaged dollar and cut the cake. It was soon devoured by the guests, 150 of them residents of the Home.

The toastmaster then introduced a series of speakers, beginning with Max Dick, President of the Home. Unfortunately he forgot the guest of honor, who had prepared a speech for the occasion, "carefully penciled on a sheet of notepaper." Not to be deterred, Mr. Wildstein, a respected Talmudic scholar, read his speech anyway. He specifically requested that the Home serve *fresh* bread because the elderly residents had dental problems, and ended with a reference to the Talmud: "The son of Ezra, when he was 18, said he felt like 70. At 109, I feel like 18."

On December 22, 1935, the new building, at 232-38 East Twelfth Street, was officially opened. "Promptly at noon a procession of 800 persons, led by a thirty-piece band of the National Hebrew Orphans' Home at Yonkers and by 109-year-old Tobias Wildstein, the oldest [resident] of the home, left the old building of the institution at 232 East Tenth Street," the *New York Times* reported.

"Carrying little American flags and blue-and-white Jewish flags, the paraders circled Tompkins Square Park in the cold Winter sunshine and then wound their way for two miles through the streets of the lower East Side before going to the new headquarters." Only once did this group of elderly people halt—and that was when the young orphans "paused to thaw out their brass horns."!

"An enthusiastic crowd of more than 2,000 persons jammed the congregation room of the new home to witness the [ceremonies], which began with the presentation of the keys to the institution to Max Dick, the president, from Israel J. Fox and Isaac Bruck, whose donations helped to pay for the \$750,000 structure." An address by Samuel Levy, President of the Borough of Manhattan, followed, in which he praised the charity of the Jewish people, to which "this home is a wonderful monument." "Other values have fallen during the last few years of the depression," he added, "but the great charity of our people has remained constant, as it ever will remain." Other speeches followed.

At the conclusion of the program, master of ceremonies Benjamin F. Spellman called for contributions from the audience to help maintain the Home. "Several hundred of the persons present went forward," donating an estimated \$40,000. "Most of the gifts were of only a few dollars," though the Ladies Auxiliary presented a check for \$7,000, collected in a house-to-house canvass of the neighborhood. Meetings were to be held at the Home each evening the following week in a effort to reach a goal of \$100,000.

Just over a year later, on January 23, 1937, President Dick died of heart disease at his residence, and was succeeded by Joseph Halpern. In 1939 Rev. Dr. Bernard Bergman took the position of rabbi at the Home. Mr. Halpern thought highly of him and promoted him to management. By June 6, 1941, he was Executive Director of the Home as well as rabbi of its congregation.

At this time the Home continued much as before, though the number of residents did not increase much above 150 as had been expected. The publicity-seeking Tobias Wildstein was still 109 years old on June 16, 1941—almost six years after his "109th birthday party"—when he scooped \$18.75 "out of a worn leather coin purse" to buy a national defense bond, making a few patriotic remarks in Yiddish. His action started a small rush among the residents gathered in the auditorium to hear Rabbi Bergman urge them "to lend a helping hand for the defense of this country." It was later learned that Mr. Wildstein had earned the money for the bond by tutoring boys in religious subjects to prepare them for confirmation.

On October 28, 1942, Leopold M. Rothman, Treasurer of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel, died at 84, and on November 30, 1946, Joseph Halpern died also. The removal of their oversight apparently gave Rabbi Bergman a freer hand in managing the affairs of the Home. Mr. Halpern was succeeded as President by Congressman Arthur G. Klein, formerly Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Home. Rabbi Bergman was a protégé of sorts of Congressman Klein; in May 1942, the Congressman invited the 32-year-old rabbi to give an invocation before the House of Representatives, and Rabbi Bergman returned the favor by hosting a testimonial dinner to Congressman Klein at the Home on April 8, 1945.

Yeshiva University conferred the degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature on Rabbi Bergman at its commencement exercises, July 24, 1947, where he shared honors with Bernard M. Barauch (honorary Doctor of Laws). Not long after, however, in 1949, the District Attorney began investigating accusations of management irregularities at the Home, though no charges were brought to court. Amid the investigation, Rabbi

Bergman resigned. (His involvement in nursing homes continued after he left the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel, though with unfortunate results; on March 11, 1976, he pled guilty to a \$1.2 million Medicaid fraud, and other serious charges against him were pending at that time.)

By the late 1940s private nursing homes were replacing those of charities. Mollie Halpern, wife of President Joseph Halpern, owned a half interest in the Olinville Nursing Home in the Bronx, which she willed to Rabbi Bergman on her death about 1948. The Home filed plans for an alteration to its premises in March, 1951, but with a cost of only \$5,000—a far cry from its previous grandiose schemes.

Little more was heard of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel after this. Mme. Anna Braginskaya-Fishson, a member of the Yiddish Art Theatre in Russia prior to 1926, died at the Home May 3, 1951, at the age of 84. Another resident, retired paper bag and twine merchant Morris A. Levy, had attained the age of 100 when he passed away there on January 7, 1952.

The Home apparently closed its doors in the mid-1960s. The staff physician, Dr. Benjamin Dubovsky, died September 14, 1963. At that time Arthur G. Klein was still President, with Ida Arbital serving as Executive Director. But a death notice of February 23, 1967, expressing sympathy for the death of James E. Gellert, retired Executive Director of the Home, was signed "Directors and Staff who had formerly constituted the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel."

The Charles Scher Auxiliary of the Home seems to have continued to function for a few more years; they placed a death notice on July 10, 1970, in sympathy for the death of their Treasurer, Joe B. Helft, signing it Dr. Sampson S. Hecht, President, Stanley Koreman, Secretary. Perhaps they looked after the needs of former residents.

Contribution Tokens

The Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel issued goldene brass one dollar contribution tokens as part of its fund raising efforts. Both round and brick-shaped pieces were made.

A. Round Tokens

Round contribution tokens were issued with the 232 E. 10 Street address. The general type is listed in *Coins Reveal: the Samuel and Daniel M. Friedenberg Collection of Coins and Medals*, by Yaakov Meshorer with the assistance of Ira Rezak (New York: The Jewish Museum), as no.

147. They were made in such large numbers that three obverse dies were required, here designated Obverse A, Obverse B, and Obverse C:



Obverse A/Reverse 1

CONTRIBUTION/ONE DOLLAR far from rim, woman in high relief



Obverse B/Reverse 1

CONTRIBUTION/ONE DOLLAR near rim, woman's shoulder in low relief



Obverse C/Reverse 1

CONTRIBUTION/ONE DOLLAR far from rim, woman's shoulder in low relief, man's bust retouched

Only one reverse die, showing a seven-story building, is known.

It is difficult to determine when these undated tokens were issued. The lot at 232 E. 10 Street was acquired in 1915, though this address was

not officially adopted for the home until 1919. In 1935 the Tenth Street address was vacated when the Home moved to Twelfth Street. The contribution tokens depict a seven-story building with a single entrance, while the original 1915 building apparently had four stories, with plans to increase it to a second entrance and five stories. From 1919 to 1925, the Home consisted of connecting four-story buildings at 230 and 232 East 10 Street, with both entrances in use; an adjacent third building was added in 1925. Besides being on a different street, the 1935 building had ten stories, not seven.

Most likely these tokens were prepared in conjunction with the \$400,000 fund drive that was discussed May 27, 1923, before the Twelfth Street property was acquired, but the \$100,000 campaign of April 1928 is another possibility. In any case, the tokens show an artist's conception of a building that was never erected.

B. Brick-shaped Tokens

Brick-shaped tokens of similar design were also issued, giving the Home's address as 232 E. 12 Street (*Coins Reveal* no. 140). They are rare.

These tokens must have been issued in 1935 or shortly before, after it had been determined to relocate the Home to Twelfth Street. Though the Home remained at this address for about thirty years longer, fund raising seems to have been sharply curtailed after 1935.

Aaron J. Levy

Aaron Jefferson Levy (born New York City, New York, July 4, 1881, died St. Petersburg, Florida, November 22, 1955), a lawyer long active in Democratic politics in New York, was President of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel circa 1916-1925. He was elected to a one-year term as Assemblyman from the Fourth District in November 1907, and re-elected in 1908, 1909, and 1910. In January 1911 he was appointed Chairman of the Codes Committee, and won re-election again in 1911 and 1912. In 1912 he was named alternate delegate to the Democratic National Convention from New York.

The following year he became majority leader of the New York State Assembly, and on November 4, 1913, was elected Municipal Court Justice for the Second District. Within three years he was chosen President of the Board of Municipal Justices (Chief Justice). On August 21, 1923, he was appointed Chairman of the Commission for Reorganization of Municipal Courts and later that year was elected Justice of the New York Supreme Court, First Judicial District. A dinner was given in his honor in

1946 by the Zionist Organization of America to mark his sixty-fifth birthday. He served until the mandatory retirement age of 70, in 1951. Soon after his retirement he became an Official Referee of the Supreme Court, but resigned effective January 15, 1953. Over 400 persons, including Supreme Court justices and members of the bar, attended his funeral, November 25, 1955.

In addition to his many charitable activities, Judge Levy was very active in fraternal organizations, joining the Freemasons, Shriners, Odd Fellows, and the Independent Order of B'rith Sholom. He was elected Grand Master of the Independent Order of B'rith Abraham in 1921 and re-elected June 5, 1923.

In 1919, while Aaron J. Levy was President of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel, the World Series was fixed in the famous "Black Sox" scandal. Much of the money needed to bribe the eight players and place the bets came from New York gambler Arnold Rothstein, who was later caricatured as "Meyer Wolfsheim" by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*—"He's the man who fixed the World's Series back in 1919."

Rothstein won \$500,000 on the first Dempsey-Tunney fight and another \$800,000 on "Sidereal" at Aqueduct in 1921. He was behind huge bond robberies, having at one time recovered \$25 million worth of bonds in an agreement that gave him 10% for himself. But his refusal to pay a \$303,000 gambling debt cost him his life. On November 4, 1928, Rothstein was found collapsed from a bullet wound at an entrance to the Park Central Hotel. Though conscious, he refused to name the man who shot him, and died two days later.

A prime suspect for the murder was George McManus, a floating-game operator who owed Rothstein \$51,000. McManus soon gave himself up and was brought before Judge Levy, who allowed him to go free on \$50,000 bail, not the usual practice for a murder indictment. It was thought that pressure had been applied by political boss James J. Hines. At McManus' trial, the jury deadlocked and Judge Nott ordered a directed verdict of acquittal. No one else was ever tried.

While on the bench, Judge Levy had been accused of protecting Rothstein's illegal gambling clubs, but apparently owed nothing to his memory. Whatever the truth of these allegations, Judge Levy was investigated by the New York State Crime Commission after he retired.

On November 19, 1952, the *New York Times* reported, the commission "closed its first public hearings with a weird picture of extraordinary happenings in the chambers of former Justice (now official referee) Aaron J. Levy in the closing years of Justice Levy's twenty-eight years on the Supreme Court bench."

Testimony was heard that both the judge and his wife received gifts from a defendant in a trial over which he presided, and which Judge Levy assigned himself to conduct. Also introduced in evidence "was a tabulation of Justice Levy's 'known cash receipts and disbursements for the period 1946-51.'" Subtraction showed that \$80,561 in cash was unaccounted for.

Other witnesses testified that the judge's son-in-law, David E. Frankenstein, received fees for some receiverships that he merely obtained for others, and controlled at least ten patronage jobs—all without holding any official position. Another of Judge Levy's court-appointed "receivers" turned out to be Mrs. Rose Connors, his cleaning lady. In addition to looking after the children and cleaning his summer home, Mrs. Connors and the judge's aide at court purchased large blocks of stock in their own names, merely signing the certificates and paying income tax on the dividends, for which Judge Levy reimbursed them.

In a deposition, Justice Levy denied taking bribes, but log sheets and other witnesses contradicted him. Examination of Mr. Frankenstein's income tax returns for 1948 through 1950 showed that he had not reported his receivership fees, while he had made stock purchases totaling \$183,476 using "fresh funds" of \$68,190. Mr. Frankenstein failed to provide a satisfactory explanation as to how he came by such sums.

Less than a month after this hearing Justice Levy resigned as Official Referee of the Supreme Court and hastily left town. After his death it was alleged by his son that he "left a suitcase crammed with more than \$600,000 in securities when he left his apartment." The Frankensteins filed replies denying the suitcase story, though admitting that all four members of their family held securities of the type described in Mr. Levy's affidavit. Casting doubt on their denials was the fact that David Frankenstein had earlier been sentenced to a year in prison for perjury. They also invoked the statute of limitations against Mr. Levy's claim.

If true, it would appear that Judge Levy had been on the take for decades. Perhaps he benefited from the Black Sox fix even as he was directing the affairs of the Home of the Sons and Daughters of Israel.

Acknowledgments

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JEWISH HISTORY IN DENMARK

The first Jews Settled in Altona (a Danish city until 1864) in 1584. In 1641 the first shul was built. At about this time the first Jew, Dr Jonah Charizi, moved to Copenhagen; he died in 1626. In 1684 Israel David and Meyer Goldschmidt received royal permission to have Minyanim (services) in their homes.

The growth of the community was quite slow, and by 1726 there were just 65 Jewish families (331 persons). In 1787 there were about 250 families (some 1,200 people). In 1813 there was an attempt to have anti-Jewish laws established, but to no avail. On March 29 1814 a royal decree was issued giving Jews Equal Rights. In 1833 the Main Synagogue in Krystalgade was dedicated.

At the turn of the century there was a large immigration of Eastern European Jews, fleeing from the persecution in Russia and in 1910 the Machzikie Hadas Synagogue was founded. Between 1933 and 1940 approximately 4,500 refugees passed through Denmark on their way to Palestine.

Denmark was occupied by the Nazis in 1940 but there were no anti Jewish activities until 1943. In 1943 Werner Best planned to remove all the Jews from Denmark. He did not anticipate trouble with this plan. However, one of Best's colleagues, Georg Duckwitz, had close personal friends in the Danish government and he immediately decided to inform them of Best's decision.

Within hours, Duckwitz's news spread throughout Denmark. Jewish and non-Jewish Danes relayed the message to Jewish friends and colleagues, and Rabbi Marcus Melchior announced the plans to his synagogue congregation in Copenhagen. Jews immediately began to plan their escape, and they were aided by their non-Jewish countrymen. Danish Jews hid with friends and neighbors, coworkers, and even complete strangers. Over the next few weeks, Danish resistance groups, now fully operational organizations, arranged to hide Jews in houses, inns, and even hospitals throughout the country. The ultimate goal was to help the Jews leave Denmark before the Germans found and captured them.

When Nazi soldiers arrived at the homes of Danish Jews on the night of October 1, they managed to capture only a few prisoners--450 of a total Danish Jewish population of approximately 8000 people. With help, most Jews managed to flee to the coast, where they awaited boats to take them

to Sweden. Jews captured by the Nazis either had not heard the news or refused to leave upon first hearing the plans.

As Jews hid throughout Denmark, individuals and resistance groups organized the rescue operation. Some Danes bought boats and managed to smuggle hundreds of Jews to Sweden. The larger groups negotiated with trustworthy Danish fishermen who agreed to take the Jews to freedom. Plans were made for the Jews to be smuggled to the docks and, once there, for them to be concealed on the Danish fishing boats, out of sight of German soldiers.

In the end, around 7500 Danish Jews escaped to Sweden--almost the entire Jewish population of Denmark. The 450 who did not escape were sent to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. All but 51 of these deportees survived the camp. The majority of the Theresienstadt prisoners returned to Denmark in 1945; most of the refugees living in Sweden also returned to Denmark at the end of the war.

After Denmark helped most of its Jewish citizens escape in October 1943, Germany tightened its grip on the Danes. The relationship between the two countries grew worse day by day. The Danes cooperated with the Nazis as little as possible. Their lack of enthusiasm angered the German leaders. In December 1943, Germany announced that its troops would blow up any Danish business unwilling to give supplies to Germany. The Danish resistance reacted by sabotaging the railroad tracks used by Germany to move its troops across Europe. In response, Germany arrested those resistance members responsible for the explosions and sent them to labor camps in Germany. The Nazis also blamed the Danish police force for the country's defiance and sent almost the entire force to concentration camps in 1944.

The Nazis did not allow the Danish government that had been in place until September 1943 to return to power. They dissolved the parliament, took away King Christian's power, and placed him under house arrest. Denmark's main source of guidance was now the Danish Freedom Council. This group served openly as the main body of the Danish resistance, and Denmark now looked to its members for leadership.

During the spring of 1945, Germany was losing its control over most of Europe. On May 5, the Nazis finally surrendered to the Allies. Danes hung welcome signs and thank-you posters to get ready for the arrival of British troops; white candles glowed in the windows of most Danish homes--bright symbols of hope for the future. After more than five years of German occupation, Danes would once again rule Denmark.

World War II took its toll across Europe. Denmark lost some of its citizens, but its losses were not nearly as great as in neighboring countries. Of 5,975 Danes imprisoned in camps by the Germans, 562 died. This number includes 58 of the 474 Danish Jews sent to Theresienstadt in October 1943.

As for the Jews. Their houses and property were properly taken care of by their Christian neighbors in their absence. When the Jews returned, their furniture and other household effects were waiting for them and they were warmly received. A stark difference to the return of Polish Jews after the war.

The numismatic illustration is of a ten knoner banknote of Denmark. This note was issued in 1943, the year of the escape of the Danish Jews from the Nazis.



A Rabbi Kaduri Amulet

By Pinchas Bar-Zev

The images which appear below are of an amulet issued by Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri, a kabbalistic sage who lives in Jerusalem. It is claimed that he is over 100 years old as his real age is kept secret. He is believed by many oriental Jews to possess magical powers. He has issued amulets by the hundreds of thousands. Sometimes they are made of metal as is the one pictured below. Others have been issued sometimes on pieces of laminated cartons, plastic, paper, key chains, holy water, holy ointments. You name it, he has issued it, especially during election time, when some political parties try to obtain his endorsement. His amulets are sometimes handed out by party activists - free of charge, while they sell for about NIS 100 each. The Kaduri business is a multi-million dollar empire, and he has a website: <http://www.kaduri.net>

The words on the obverse are kabbalistic expressions, apparently from a book '*Sefer Pinot HaMerkava*' (The book of the Corners of the Chariot) by Rabbi Moshe Haim Luzzato (*The Ramchal*), one of the founders of kabbalism. These have no regular meaning in Hebrew, but those proficient in kabbalah may know what they mean.

Obverse: Top: 'Macabbi' (the Hasmonean heroes) Center: Rabbi Kaduri's effigy. Bottom: 'Tzamarkad' - twice, but with different punctuations Near bottom rim, in small letters: 'HaRav Kaduri' (Rabbi Kaduri)

Reverse: Around: '*Kamiah LeRefua LeShmira LeHatzlacha*' (Amulet for Health - or well-being or recuperation, for Safety, for Success) Center: 'Kar'aSatan' (The root of Kar'a means 'to tear apart'). So, the meaning might be that he or she who wears this amulet will be guarded against Satan (courtesy of Rabbi Kaduri, of course...)



The History of the Jews in Łódź

Until 1782, the only Jews in Łódź were the local tavern keepers. The historical-political changes which took place on the turn of the 18th and 20th century allowed the development of Łódź from a small, agricultural town into a strong industrial center and with it an influx of the Jewish population. By 1808 there was a Jewish community of 58 members, a year later the first (wooden) synagogue was built in the to-day Wolborska Street and in 1811 the so called Old Cemetery in the Wesola Street was established, which served the community till 1892.

In spite of numerous economic depressions, the number of the community members grew steadily. In the 1860's Jewish population counted about 30,000 people. More than a third of manufactures were in the hands of Jewish industrialists. In the 1880's following the pogroms in the Moscow District, Russian Jews fled to Łódź. At the end of the century, the number of Jewish residents of the city approached 100,000.

The first 30 years of the 20th century brought a rise in Jewish activities in the culture and on the social field. The literary-music company "Hazomir" was operating and included chorus, drama circle and a library. A symphonic orchestra was established and there were active sport associations.

The history of that world was cut short by the Holocaust. On September 8th, 1939 Łódź was occupied by German troops. In April 1940 the town was re-named *Litzmannstadt*, after the German general Karl Litzmann who was killed near Łódź in 1915. 34% of the 665,000 inhabitants were Jews, making Łódź an important center of Jewish culture in Poland.

From the moment of occupation, the Jews suffered from persecution by SS and 1,500 *Volksdeutsche*, the latter members of the approximately 60,000 inhabitants of German origin. Jews were attacked, deported for work, their shops and flats plundered and institutions were closed by the Nazis. A multitude of harassments made Jewish lives more difficult: Jews were not allowed to leave the town without permission, possess cars or radios, have bank accounts, use public transportation, celebrate religious holidays, etc. Between November 15 and 17, 1939 all synagogues were destroyed. From the 17 November Jews had to wear the "Yellow Star" (*Judenstern*) on the front or back of their clothes.

The announcement of the establishing of the Jewish quarter was publicized and all Jewish residents of Łódź were moved to this area. Then

the Ghetto was closed and cut off of the remainder of the city with a barbed wire and numerous police posts. Following the first stage of the deportation, about 160,000 Jews found themselves in the Lodzer Ghetto. Transports of Jews from Austria, Bohemia, Luxembourg and Germany were added to the ghetto population

In spite of closure and difficult conditions, the Jews in Ghetto organized their own administration, schooling system, post, health and social care. There was a House of Culture, where the theatre and music performances (among the famous "Hazomir" chorus) took place. But difficult life conditions decimated the Ghetto population. Many were dying exhausted by hunger, to-hard work or diseases, part of them from the shooting by police or from torments by so called Kriminalpolizei.

Beginning in 1942 the Jews were deported from the ghetto to the first extermination camp in Poland, Chelmno on the Ner. The first sent were those receiving subventions and prisoners, then the west European Jews and at the end those not working, children and old people. In the result of these deportations the Ghetto was transferred into a large camp of slave work.

In the middle of June 1944, seeing the war front coming closer, the Germans started the so called final liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto. The deportations started again - to Chelmno on Ner and to Auschwitz. On 29th of August 1944 the last transport of Lodz Jews left the railway station for Auschwitz. Only a small group of Jews was left in the ghetto in order to clean it.

The 60th anniversary of the closing of the Lodz Ghetto was commemorated in Poland by a 20 zlotych commemorative coin.. This coin was issued in memory of the victims in Lodz Ghetto. The proof silver coin features on one side an image of a Jewish boy with a Star of David on his chest, holding a pot and a book, against the background of a stylized element of a bridge linking the two parts of the Ghetto. The other side shows in the center a bricked up wall, the Polish eagle emblem, the date 2004 and denomination



The Jews of Tuscany

Tuscany is a region in central Italy. While there is not any information on Jews in Tuscany during the Roman era it is likely that a Jewish community existed then at least in Florence. The first reliable data comes from Benjamin of Tudela who found Jews in Pisa and in Lucca (c. 1159). Jews presumably engaged in moneylending in Tuscany in the 13th century. In 1309 three Jewish loan bankers were invited to San Gimignano. The negotiations with them and others did not succeed, but in 1392 the first agreement regulating Jewish loan banking activities (condotta) there was concluded.

Until 1437 Jewish moneylenders were excluded from Florence itself, but not from the provincial cities under its sovereignty. In 1393 a condotta was concluded at San Miniato with a group of Jewish bankers headed by members of the Min ha-Keneset or Min Bet-El (Della Sinagoga) family of Rome. A concession to maintain a loan bank in San Gimignano was granted in 1410, and in 1423 a similar license was extended to the City of Pisa, again to this family. At the beginning of the 15th century the family also engaged in moneylending in Pescia, Prato, Colle Val d'Elsa, and perhaps in Pistoia. Authorization to permit Jews to engage in moneylending was also extended to several other cities. In exchange, the central authorities demanded a tax which varied between 50 and 250 florins yearly, according to the importance of the locality.

In 1416 representatives of the communities of Tuscany took part in the Council of Bologna. The establishment of Christian loan banks (Monti di Pietà) in the 16th century caused some difficulty to Jewish moneylenders in Tuscany, but there was no conspicuous change in their situation, though there was an unsuccessful attempt to excommunicate the Jews of Empoli.

The reign of Duke Cosimo de' Medici was originally beneficial for the Jews. In 1553 however he yielded to papal pressure and ordered the burning of the Talmud. In 1551 he had issued an invitation to merchants from the Levant, including Jews, to settle in Tuscany and do business there. In 1557 he gave asylum to Jewish refugees from the Papal States. The same year he refused to implement the anti-Jewish restrictions issued by Pope Paul IV or to hand over the Jews to the jurisdiction of the Inquisition. But Cosimo's attitude toward the Jews changed when he wished to gain the support of Pope Pius V for his aspirations to the title of grand duke. In 1567 he rigorously applied the obligation to wear the Jewish badge.

In 1570 information was collected on the Jews apparently as a preliminary to concentrating them in Florence. On the pretext that Jews had

violated some of the articles of their moneylending concessions, all their agreements in Florence were abrogated in 1570. Subsequently the expulsion of the Jews from all cities excepting Florence and Siena was ordered. In these cities the Jewish inhabitants were segregated in a ghetto along with refugees from other localities.

At the end of the century, however, the Grand Duke Ferdinand I (1587–1609) invited Jews, including Marranos, to settle in Pisa and the free port of Leghorn, which before long became one of the great Jewish centers of the Mediterranean area.

At the end of the 16th century a new community was established in Pitigliano, which served as a haven for the Jews from the Papal States. This community prospered mainly in the 18th century. At the end of the 17th century the preaching of the apostate Paolo Medici led to anti-Jewish riots. A marked improvement in the conditions of the Jews in Tuscany began in the 18th century under the Lorraine dynasty. Leopold I (later Emperor Leopold II of Austria), who reigned in Tuscany from 1765 to 1790, granted all the Jews there the same rights as the Jews of Leghorn. In 1779 he permitted Jews to sit on the municipal councils, and in 1789 to hold official positions.

In 1798 the French occupied Tuscany and granted the Jews full rights of citizenship. These were abrogated in 1799 after the retreat of the French forces. In 1801, on the establishment of the Kingdom of Etruria by Napoleon, the Jews in Tuscany were again granted full rights. Between 1810 and 1814, when Tuscany was incorporated in the French Empire, the communities were organized on the lines of the French Consistory. Jews began to acquire land and to enter middle-class society. Jews were no longer required to live in the ghettos, although most continued to reside there.

The House of Lorraine continued its liberal policy, and consequently Tuscany attracted many Jews in poor economic circumstances from Rome. Jews were permitted to attend public schools and universities in Tuscany. They took part in all branches of the economy in business and industry. Only government positions, military service, and the legal profession remained closed to them.

On April 30, 1859, Tuscany was incorporated in the Kingdom of Sardinia (later the Kingdom of Italy) and the principle of equal rights without discrimination on religious grounds was introduced there. This obliged every Jew to belong to the community and pay dues to it. However, between 1865 and 1905 the communities successively dispensed with levying compulsory dues.

The Italian law of 1931 regulating the organization of the Jewish communities applied to Tuscany, and the principle of compulsory taxation was again introduced. The provincial Tuscan communities dwindled in the 19th century like most of the small communities of Italy. In 1969 there were only a few fully organized communities in Florence, Pisa (including Viareggio and Lucca), and Leghorn (Livorno), and partially in Siena.

The Bank of Tuscany issued several series of banknotes in 1870. The illustrated note was approved by decree on the 24th April 1870. The value was for 50 centesimal. These early banknotes are quite rare. This one appeared on Ebay and was the impetus for this article.



Jewish History in GAZA

By Benny Morris

For the greater part of ancient history - that past in which the Jewish people anchor their claim to Israel - the Gaza Strip was not part of the Jewish state. The embattled settlers may have screamed that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was expelling Jews from part of *Eretz Yisrael*, "the land of Israel." And the first patriarch Abraham, may have understood God, at least on paper (or papyrus), to have included this narrow strip of territory in his promised domain. But in reality, the Gaza Strip and the coastal towns to its north, for most of the years between, say, 1250 B.C. and 135 A.D. - the era in which the Jews lived in and often ruled the land of Israel - was eluded from Israelite or Judean control and, indeed, Jewish habitation.

It is not even clear that the great Hebrew kings David and Solomon, under whom the kingdom reached its vastest expanse, ever directly controlled the Gaza area. The Hebrew tribes that crossed the Jordan River and pushed into the Holy Land in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. settled and established their rule along its hilly central spine, between Ishtamua (present-day Samua), Hebron and Shechem (present-day Nablus). This stretch, with Jerusalem at its center, comprises the area that the Bible and many Israelis now refer to as Judea and Samaria, and the rest of the world calls the West Bank. This is the historical heartland of the Jewish people - and of course today it is largely populated by Arabs, who claim it as their own and are demanding that Israel evacuate it.

By contrast, the coastal strip to the west, from Rafah north through Gaza to Caesarea, was the land of the strangers, the Gentiles. Paradoxically, Tel Aviv, that ultimate Israeli-Jewish city, serves as the hub of this coastline today, a city of the plain par excellence. Thus in a spiritual sense, history served up a terrible irony at the start of the Zionist enterprise. Wishing to return to Shiloh and Bethel, Jerusalem and Hebron, the Jews immigrating to Palestine found its hilly core heavily populated by Arabs. So the early settlers put down roots in the thinly populated coastal plain and interior lowlands (the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys), where land was available and relatively cheap.

Then, in the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, the Jews established their state in those same lowlands, while Judea and Samaria were occupied by the Jordanian Army, which resisted Israeli takeover. Thus history was reversed: the reborn Jewish state sprang up precisely in those areas that millenniums earlier had been the domain of the Gentiles.

The Gaza Strip was the exception. It was the only part of the old Gentile coastal plain that was saved for the Arabs, by the Egyptian Army. It changed hands, of course, in 1967 (along with the West Bank); but with the Israeli withdrawal, it will regain a long tradition of evading Jewish control.

In antiquity, Gaza was part of Biblical Pleshet or Philistia - the domain of the Philistines, a non-Semitic "sea people" hailing from the Greek isles who probably invaded and settled along the coast in the 12th century B.C. (more or less simultaneous with the arrival in the Holy Land of the Hebrews from the east). From their towns of Gaza, Ashkelon and Jaffa, the Philistines controlled the coastal plain from 1150 B.C. to 586 B.C., and intermittently challenged Jewish rule over the inland hill country. It was in these forays eastward that the Philistines lost their champion, Goliath, to young David's pebble and, in turn, slew King Saul and his son Jonathan on Mount Gilboa, displaying their heads on the walls of Beit Shean, in the Jordan Valley.

Philistia was conquered (along with Judea) by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. and the Philistines were exiled and vanished from history. In the second century A.D., after having quashed a Jewish revolt, the Roman rulers renamed the land of Israel - in order to de-Judaize it - Palestina (a derivative of Philistia). They thus gave the Arabs, who were to arrive on the scene five centuries later, the name they were to adopt. In this nominal sense, there is justice in the Palestinian Arabs now gaining possession of ancient Philistia.

Of course, these historical details are of little interest to the Islamic fundamentalists, who, by most accounts, enjoy majority support in the Gaza Strip. For them, history begins with the conquests of Muhammad and his caliphs in the seventh century. According to Koranic law, all the land they conquered (including not only today's Palestine but also Spain and Portugal) became inalienable Islamic territory. Or as Mahmoud Zahar, a Hamas leader, said recently, the fundamentalists seek to control not just the Gaza Strip and the West Bank; as he put it, "All of Palestine is our land."

Indeed, probably most Arabs would like to "de-Judaize" all of Palestine, and many, no doubt, see the Gaza evacuation as a first step. But that remains a distant dream. Gaza may be reverting to "Gentile" rule, but whether the West Bank - in which lie the true historical roots of the Jewish people - will do so also is another, and far more painful, question.

The first city coins of Gaza were struck in 61-60 B.C.E., the beginning of the local era. The mintmark of the city of Gaza is 𐤄 or "mem" from the Phoenician alphabet. This is the first initial of the name

Marnas, as Zeus was called by the people of Gaza. He was a special local god. Other coins of Gaza show the god Minos, the goddesses Tyche and Io, temples, and on the early coins the cornucopia. Coins were also mined in Gaza during the Persian, Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods.

When the United Nations Emergency Forces withdrew their forces from the Gaza Strip just before the Six Day War in 1967, they left behind several series of canteen tokens which were issued in booklets. Many were issued to obtain cigarettes and are known as cigarette tokens. Others were denominated in Egyptian Pounds in 1, 2, 5, 10, 25 piastre and 1 Egyptian Pound. The face of the scrip has printed U.N./E.F. (United Nations Emergency Forces), Middle East /denomination/ not good if detached and serial number.



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The Jews of Syria

Jewish presence in Syria dates back to biblical times and is intertwined with the history of Jews in neighboring Eretz Israel. With the advent of Christianity, restrictions were imposed on the community. The Arab conquest in 636 C.E., however, greatly improved the lot of the Jews. Unrest in neighboring Iraq in the 10th century resulted in Jewish migration to Syria and brought about a boom in commerce, banking, and crafts.

During the reign of the Fatimids, the Jew Menashe Ibrahim El-Kazzaz ran the Syrian administration, and he granted Jews positions in the government. Syrian Jewry supported the aspirations of the Arab nationalists and Zionism, and Syrian Jews believed that the two parties could be reconciled and that the conflict in Palestine could be resolved.

After Syrian independence from France in 1946, attacks against Jews and their property increased, culminating in the pogroms of 1947, which left all shops and synagogues in Aleppo in ruins. Thousands of Jews fled the country, and their homes and property were taken over by the local Muslims. For the next decades, Syrian Jews were, in effect, hostages of a hostile regime. They could leave Syria only on the condition that they leave members of their family behind. Thus the community lived under siege, constantly under fearful surveillance of the secret police.

Prior to the initiation of the peace process in the Middle East, the Syrian Jewish community was deprived of many basic human and civil rights. Those who attempted to flee across the borders illegally were usually caught, arrested, and cruelly tortured in the dungeons of the secret police. The plight of Syrian Jewry became an international human rights issue in the mid-1970s. The United States, Canada, and France played leading roles in the efforts to bring justice to the community. The Madrid Conference in 1992 was the turning point for the Jewish community. American and Israeli pressure succeeded in convincing the Syrian government to declare that Jews could leave freely.

Ever since 1948 Syria has continuously led extreme Arab opposition to the existence of the State of Israel, promoting and supporting hostile and terror actions of militant organizations concentrated in Lebanon. Syria is still listed by the US State Department as a terrorist sponsoring country.

The Joab Ben Zeruiah Synagogue of Aleppo, also known as the Yellow Synagogue, has a history spanning 1,500 years. The synagogue was built on the site of the holy cave of the prophet Elijah, and it is one of the few synagogues that has seven arks and a permanent outdoor bima (called a tevah) that was used for prayers in the courtyard. Although the

synagogue was built by the Musta'arab Jews, when the refugees from Spain joined the community in the 16th century, a separate, adjacent wing was constructed. Over the years, as the two communities integrated, the wings were combined. In the pogrom of 1947, the interior of the synagogue was severely damaged by fire. In the mid-1970s, the Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn, New York, was permitted to fund its restoration. However, in the mid-1980s, as the community dwindled, the synagogue was closed down, and it remains locked to the present day.

The Aleppo Codex, called in Hebrew Keter Aram Zobah, is the



earliest-known manuscript comprising the full text of the Bible. The text was then verified and vocalized by Aaron Ben-Asher. According to tradition, this was the manuscript consulted by Maimonides when he set down the exact rules for writing Torah scrolls. According to recent research, it might very well be that Maimonides sanctified and codified everything he found in the Aleppo Codex. The Codex was copied by the scribe Shlomo Ben-Buya'a in the Land of Israel over 1,000 years ago. Soon after, it was moved to Egypt and was finally deposited with the

Aleppo community at the end of the 14th century. The Codex was kept in a vault in the Cave of Elijah, under the Yellow Synagogue of Aleppo, and closely guarded as the talisman of the community for over 600 years. When the synagogue was put to the torch in 1947, the Codex was saved and hidden for ten years. In 1957, it was entrusted to Mordechai Faham who smuggled the remains out of Syria. In 1958, it was brought to Jerusalem and was presented to President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. Today the Codex is housed in the Ben-Zvi Institute. Of the original 487 leaves of the Codex, only about 295 remain. They are a priceless heirloom of the Jewish people. Probably it is the most authoritative, accurate and sacred source document,

both for the Biblical text and for its vocalization and cantillation. It has greater religious and scholarly import than any other manuscript of the Bible.

The last Jews who wanted to leave Syria departed with the chief rabbi in October 1994. Prior to 1947, there were some 30,000 Jews made up of three distinct communities, each with its own traditions: the Kurdish-speaking Jews of Kamishli, the Jews of Aleppo with roots in Spain, and the original eastern Jews of Damascus, called Must'arab. Today only a tiny remnant of these communities remains.

The Hanukka coin issued in 1974 by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation honored Syrian Jewry by depicting a menorah from Syria. The Damascus lamp was meant to serve as a reminder that the remnants of the Jewish communities in Damascus, Aleppo and Kamishli were slowly dying in captivity, locked in ghettos, exposed to humiliation, denied elementary rights, cut off from any means of livelihood awaiting the day they could emerge from darkness to light, from servitude to freedom.

Obverse: Within an incuse, depicting a three arched gate, the par value "10 Lirot" and above, the date "5735-1974", Leaves adorn the lamp and the word "Israel" appears in Hebrew, Arabic and English.

Reverse: Within the center, the front of the Damascus lamp is embossed inside an incuse figure of a gate with three arches. On both sides of the gate, two pillars adorned by panels. The eight-branched lamp is surrounded by fronds and leaves. Between the leaves, towards the circle, beneath the lamp, the legend: "An 18th Century Hanukka lamp from Damascus."



Jewish-American Hall of Fame Medal Honors World War II Hero Lt. Colonel Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal

It is appropriate, as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, that Lt. Col. Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal, now a healthy 88 years young, has been chosen as the distinguished honoree of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame. Former US Mint engraver Jim Licaretz has designed the medal depicting "Rosie" briefing his 418th Squadron crew in 1943 on last minute details before they board their B-17, aptly called "Rosie's Riveters," at Thorpe Abbots, East Anglia, England, home base of the 100th Bomb Group. This is the 36th issue in what is now the longest continuous series of art medals in America.

The large 2-inch, limited edition medals are available for contributions of \$35 for bronze (limited to 500 pieces), \$95 for pure silver (limited to 250 pieces), and \$150 for one of only 50 gold-plated silver pieces. Credit card orders can be placed by calling (818) 225-1348, or checks can be sent to the non-profit Jewish-American Hall of Fame, 5189 Jefferdale Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91364. Add \$5 per order for shipping and insurance. **MENTION THAT YOU ARE AN AINA MEMBER AND TAKE 10% DISCOUNT.**

The day after Pearl Harbor was attacked, Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was assigned preflight training, and was flying in just a week after completing the 9-week course. Flying a total of 52 combat missions, Rosenthal became one of the most decorated pilots in the Eighth Air Force. He received 16 decorations, including the Distinguished Cross for "extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against the enemy," the Silver Star (with cluster) for "gallantry in action," the Distinguished Flying Cross (with cluster) for "heroism or extraordinary achievement during aerial flight," the Air Medal (with seven clusters), the Purple Heart (with cluster), plus the British Distinguished Flying Cross and the French Croix de Guerre.

In August 1943, Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal joined the 418th Squadron of the "Bloody" 100th Bombardment Group, stationed in England. Thirteen B-17s took off for a bombing mission over Munster ... but only one returned - Rosie's Riveters - full of holes and flying on two engines. But in spite of the intercom being out, the oxygen system shot-up and a large ragged hole in the skin of the right wing, they had successfully dropped their bombs over the target. It was only Rosie's third combat mission.

In March, 1944 Rosie's Riveters completed its 25th mission, which completed their military service. But Rosie reenlisted, saying "I had to do

what I could for as long as I was able." This was in spite of the fact that 15 missions was the average life of a bomber crew. Later, Rosenthal was made head of the 350th Squadron after the CO was shot down. Intelligence Officer Marvin Bowman found Rosenthal "one of the great figures of the Air Force; a shy, modest, and patriotic gentleman of truly amazing courage and achievement."

When Rosenthal's plane went down over Germany in September, he broke his arm and nose - but luckily was rescued by the Free French. As soon as his arm had healed Rosie returned to his original (418th) Squadron, and was chosen to lead the mission to Berlin on February 3, 1945 to prevent supplies and reinforcements from being shipped to the Eastern front. Rosenthal was already on the bomb run when a direct flak hit put an engine on fire which rapidly spread. His blazing Fortress still managed to drop its bombs on the targeted Erkner factory before Rosenthal gave the signal to "Abandon ship." The rest of the crew parachuted and after B-17 had descended to about 1,000 feet, Rosenthal was the last to leave with the ground dangerously close. Because he had headed the plane toward the Russian lines (which were approaching Berlin) he was found by Russians, who embraced him and took him to a hospital. Rosie had fractured the same arm that had recently mended. The "Americansky" was taken to Moscow where he was entertained by the Russians, as well as U.S. Ambassador Averell Harriman. This was his 52nd mission; there was to be just one more. Rosie flew his last mission after VE-Day ... to free prisoners from concentration camps. Shortly after V-E Day, Rosenthal was back in Germany as an assistant to the United States' Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials.

The medal design is based on a painting by Gil Cohen, depicting crew members (left to right): Waste Gunner S/Sgt. Loren Darling, Pilot 1st Lt. Robert Rosenthal, Radio Operator T/Sgt. Michael Boccuzzi, and Waist Gunner S/Sgt. James Mack.



Mintmark on Israeli Coins

By: Shmuel Aviezer

Mintmark on coins is as old as the coins themselves. Already on Greek coins there appeared the city symbols: Owl, ox, fish, turtle. Mintmarks along the times were of different shapes: Animals, flowers, letters, numbers, stars etc.

The purpose of a mintmark differs in mints: Some describe a special finish of the coin, such as "proof", while others indicate the name of the mint. Many mint directors choose to imprint their private seals on the coin and when the director changes the mintmark follows suit. This procedure, for example, has been a tradition in the Dutch mint in Utrecht.

Mintmarks are designed to be of a tiny size and are usually impressed on the obverse of the coin, where the effigy (or principal motif) is depicted. But other alternatives are not excluded.

On the circulation coins of Israel there are no mintmarks. These appear only on commemorative or special coins. The first time a mintmark was imprinted on a commemorative coin was on the Independence Day coin – 1959 – "Ingathering of the Exiles". On the proof variety of this coin the Hebrew letter "mem" (meaning "special") appeared. This procedure continues on the proof coins up to this day.

(It is to be noted that on the first Israeli commemorative coin, the "Menorah" of 1958, issued on the tenth Anniversary of Independence, there was no mintmark on the proof variety. That is why it is only by the quality of the minting, discerned by proficient eyes, that a proof coin is perceived).

Starting from the Brilliant Uncirculated (BU issue of the 1971 Independence Day Coin – "Science-Based Industries" – a tiny Star of David mintmark figured in. As guided by the directive of the Public Committee advising the Bank of Israel, this Star of David was totally filled inside to eliminate the crossing lines of the familiar one.

There were two exceptions on the appearance of a different mintmark on Israeli Commemorative coins. On the 1967 – 5757 "Victory" proof coin and on the 1969 "Peace" brilliant-uncirculated coin, the letter "Kuf" is marked, signifying the Jerusalem Kretchmer Metalworks that minted these coins.

The Government of Israel, upon the proposals submitted by the Bank of Israel, decided to add the definition "Special Coin" to the already included "commemorative coin", to the relevant paragraph in the Bank of Israel law. This Amendment opened the door to the Bank to issue series of

circulation coins in a special finish. Therefore, since 1971, mint sets of the current circulation coins have been issued, all carrying the tiny Star of David mintmark. The 1973 set, marking the 25th Anniversary of Israel's Independence, was all minted in a unified copper-nickel alloy. Another outstanding issue was the 1980 set, marking the 25th anniversary of the Bank of Israel, where all the coins were of pure nickel composition. On the 40th Independence Day, 1988, the set was again produced in pure nickel.

With the advent of the sheqel series in 1980, the Bank of Israel, together with the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation, took the decision to issue the circulation-coin sets in Piefort shape. These would be produced in doubling the thickness of the usual ones. ("Piefort" or "Piedfort" in French, relates to the double-thick coins issued already in the 12th century, presumably to allow engraving letterings or ornamentations on the edge). It goes without saying that these coins always carried the Star of David mintmark.

When the New Sheqel series was introduced in 1985, the thickness of the new coins was accordingly adapted. Even the current bi-metal 10 sheqalim coin (comprising nickel-bonded steel ring and aureate-bonded bronze center) was produced in double-thickness after exclusive techniques were enacted by the Dutch mint in Utrecht to surmount difficulties arising from the unusual metal composition of this coin. Eventually this became the first "piefort" bi-metal coin in the world.

(This article updates the first one on the subject of mintmarks as published in the "Shekel" in the Nov.-Dec. 96 issue).

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PROFILE OF A WRITER

Shmuel Aviezer, a contributing writer for "The Shekel" magazine for over 15 years, was born in Baghdad, Iraq. He immigrated to Israel with his family in 1951, settling in the immigrant town of Beit Shemesh near Jerusalem, where he eventually served as the very first chairman of the local counsel for a year and a half. He is married to Miriam Steiner Aviezer who is also a writer. She is the author of the novel "The Soldier With the Golden Buttons" telling about the life of a child during the Holocaust. Shmuel and Miriam have one daughter, who is currently majoring in "Expressive Therapy", and is married to graphic artist Zohar. They have a two year old daughter named Ariel.

Shmuel graduated from the Jewish History Department at the University of Jerusalem. He worked at the Bank of Israel for 37 years and is now retired from there. For 20 of those years, he was responsible for much of the currency of Israel, the printing of banknotes and the minting of coins. Among other positions, he was the Assistant Director of the Bank's Currency Department.

One of Shmuel's greatest accomplishments took place in 1980 and in 1985 where he was the 'man behind the scene' of the reform of the currency in Israel. The first reform in 1980 was the changeover from the pound (Lira) series to the Sheqel series. The second major reform was in 1985 and that was the elimination of three zeroes from the denominations of the Banknotes in order to cope with the soaring inflation.

Shmuel had to work under a veil of secrecy for nearly two and one-half years, sometimes single-handedly, during the handling of these reforms and until both projects were completed and officially put into place. And, as we all know from being collectors and remember when this happened, it was done so very successfully.

Prior to Shmuel's involvement with banknotes and coins, he had to become an expert on the subject. In 1990, he edited the bi-lingual catalog of "Israel's Banknotes and Coins" published by the Bank of Israel. Beginning in June of 1995, he was a member of the editorial board of the publication "Currency", published by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation (IGCMC) until November of 1998 when it was no longer published. Over the years, Shmuel has voluntarily given lectures and presented seminars on the *Historical and Contemporary Perspectives of the Currency of Israel* to students and teachers, the elderly, cultural clubs and many institutions.

In addition to accomplishing all of this, Shmuel has found the time to write two books about Iraqi Jewry, their way of life and their folklore. One is written as a novel and the other is written as short stories. Shmuel is also an active volunteer guide at the Museum of Babylonian Jewry in Or, Yehuda where he gives presentations about Jewish life in Iraq and the contribution to Jewish culture in general by the Iraqi Jews.

Since 1989, Shmuel has been a contributing writer for "*The Shekel*", writing over 70 articles, mostly about the varied aspects of the history of Israel's currency. In 1994-1995, he was honored by being the recipient of the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award, honoring his achievements and expertise in the field of Jewish numismatics.

Written by Donna J. Sims

Editor's Note:

We first met Shmuel Aviezer in the 1970's when Florence and I attended Israel on the A. I. N. A. study tours. Our friendship has grown over the years and we have met socially each time we went to Israel. We often speak by telephone and I look forward to receive articles from him almost monthly. Shmuel is a terrific person who has recorded in detail every detail on the creation and manufacture of Israel's Currency for the SHEKEL readership. For this we and the Israel numismatic fraternity owe him our gratitude.





CLUB BULLETIN

DONNA J. SIMS N.L.G.

Editor

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INS / ICC OF LOS ANGELES – This group meets the third Thursday of the month at Factor's Deli in Beverly Hills beginning at 7 pm. Those coming early enjoy dinner together. This month will be a study-discussion on CM47, the "Exchange National Bank of Chicago" medal (the first American Bank in Israel), minted in 1972 by the IGCM. (I was honored by being presented a set of these medals, one bronze and two silver and I thought they would be a great program study topic at our upcoming meeting. Of course looking at the medals gave me reason to go and look them up in my Haffner book.)

BUY/SELL/TRADE: (1) Wish to purchase one 30mm bronze or silver 1988 Anne Frank medal. . . . (2) Have available for purchase 1972 CM47 state medal "Exchange National Bank of Chicago". If you are interested in either of these, please contact me (address listed above) and I will put you in touch with the right person.

COMMENTS FROM DJS: Thank you again for all your wonderful comments about my "Profile" series. It has certainly been a challenge but one that I have enjoyed doing. I have been in contact with several people for their information and am now waiting to hear from them. If you are one of those persons, please get back to me as soon as possible. All other correspondence and responses are now up to date finally. (Today is a somber day – it just so happens to be 9-11. What more can I say on that.) Be well, be happy!

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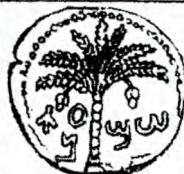
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NAOMI SHEMER COIN

COMMEMORATIVE COIN ISSUED BY THE BANK OF ISRAEL 2005/5765

Naomi Shemer was known as Israel's "First Lady of Israeli Song". She was a prolific song writer and composer and expressed her profound love of the beautiful landscapes of Israel through song and poetry.

Born in 1930 in Kibbutz Kinneret overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Naomi Shemer's exceptional musical talent was enhanced by the inspiration she drew from the magnificent surrounding views of the Lake and the Jordan Valley. She studied at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem.

Shemer knew how to put words to music and music to words, perfectly. Her repertoire included hundreds of songs, of which her most famous song was "Jerusalem of Gold" that she composed in 1967, at the time of the Six Day War. This song became extremely popular and was translated into many different languages. She set poems to music, including works of the famous Israeli poets Rachel and Natan Alterman. Her song *Hoopa Hey*, which she wrote for the Israel Defense Forces, won an international song contest in Italy in 1960. In 1963, she wrote a song "The Eucalyptus Grove" in honor of the Kibbutz Kinneret Jubilee. For her contribution to music, Naomi Shemer was awarded the Israel Prize in 1983.



COIN SPECIFICATIONS

Cat. No.	Metal and Finish	Face	Mint Mark	Diameter	Weight	Max.Mintage
31686300	Gold/917 22k, Proof	NIS 10	"נ" (Mem)	30mm	16.96g	555
21686380	Silver/925 Proof	NIS 2	"נ" (Mem)	38.7mm	28.8g	1,800
21686300	Silver/925 Proof-like	NIS 1	Star of David	30mm	14.4g	1,800
71686331	Set of the 3 above coins		71686222	Set of the 2 silver coins		

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